CONFIDENTIAL

Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 EB-08
DODE-00 H-01 NSC-01 NSAE-00 HA-08 L-03 L&B-04
TRSE-00 PM-09 PA-01 SIL-01 INM-06 DCS-00 SAL-01
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037621 031921Z /53

R 031438Z SEP 82
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO USINT HAVANA
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3872
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HEIGHTS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 09472

E. O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PEPR, SNAR, ELAB, CU, CO
SUBJECT: RELEASE OF COLOMBIANS ACCUSED OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN CUBAN WATERS

REF: HAVANA 05623 (NOTAL)

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. THE INFORMATION CONVEYED BY THE SWISS EMBASSY WAS CORRECT AND THE RELEASE WAS COVERED IN THE COLOMBIAN PRESS.

3. TWENTY-NINE OF THE COLOMBIANS RELEASED WERE CREW ABOARD THE VESSELS "SOCORRO," LUKY STAR" AND "LILIANA." ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, THEY WERE DETAINED ABOUT A YEAR AGO AND THE TOTAL MARIJUANA ABOARD THE SHIPS WAS 52 TONS. ONE OTHER COLOMBIAN WAS THE NAVIGATOR ON A PRIVATE PLANE PILOTED BY ALLEN JACKSON (IDENTIFIED AS A NORTH AMERICAN). IT WAS SAID THAT JACKSON IS STILL IN PRISON AND THAT THE PLANE, WHICH STRAYED OFF COURSE, WAS CARRYING CONTRABAND AMPHETAMINES.

4. THE RECENT RELEASE OF THE COLOMBIANS WAS PART OF A LONG EFFORT BY THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SEAMEN (A COLOMBIAN SHIPS' OFFICERS UNION) WHICH GOES BACK TO 1973. AT LEAST 150 OTHER CREW MEMBERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED THROUGH THE YEARS. AS PART OF THE RECENT EFFORT, THE UNION FIRST APPROACHED THE COLOMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THEN GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ. (GARCIA IS KNOWN TO BE FRIENDLY WITH THE CUBANS AND IS LIVING IN SELF-IMPOSED EXILE IN PARIS.)

5. ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, GARCIA WAS AT THE AIRPORT IN HAVANA TO SEE HIS FELLOW COLOMBIANS OFF. GARCIA STATED HE WOULD NOT INVOLVE HIMSELF IN THE RELEASE OF THE OTHER 16 DETAINED COLOMBIANS -- THAT WAS A MATTER FOR THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

6. COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION AND SOME OF ITS OFFICERS ARE KNOWN TO THE LABATT. SOME TIME AGO THEY ADVISED HIM OF THEIR EFFORTS TO FREE THE SEAMEN. ALTHOUGH THE UNION'S OFFICERS PROFESS ADMIRATION FOR THE U. S. LABOR MOVEMENT, SEVERAL HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING AND THEREFORE THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CONTACT BETWEEN THEM AND THE EMBASSY. BOYATT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, A/CDC/MR
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